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PROLOGUE: GREAT STREETS AND GREAT CITIES

I believe very strongly that the Cities that pay attention – really pay attention – to the quality of life will be the cities that thrive in the 21st Century.

– Richard M. Daley, Chicago Mayor



Great streets, along with their plazas, portals and parks, are the symbols of great cities. By connection, they make vital and diverse communities whole. By accommodating, they make congregation and communication the theater of the community. By design, they reflect the civic aspirations of the citizens. There are no great cities without a great street or two and no great streets without a great city providing the context.

Currently, Third Avenue is not a very good street, and certainly not a great street. Quite simply, this is because next to nothing has been provided for the pedestrian's comfort or interest. Instead, one finds boxy brown steel and plywood bus shelters, loud signs and orange flags saying 'stay out' (directed to cars but seen by all) and brightly outlined loading zones that impede upon the pedestrian area. Fortunately, since Third Avenue is both well located and home to many wonderful buildings and uses, its current condition can be greatly improved. This analysis, in conjunction with the recommendations and design concept herein, explores that potential.



SUMMARY

Need

The future health and growth of Seattle cannot support the continuing stress and inefficiencies imposed by single occupancy vehicles as the primary means to access and circulate in downtown. Third Avenue is centrally located in the heart of downtown Seattle and ideally suited to serve both a critical transit function and vibrant retail use. Unfortunately, in its current state, Third Avenue is uninviting, unattractive and generally a dreadful place to walk, shop or wait for a bus. This unfortunate condition limits transit use, shopping activity or simply walking between downtown destinations. The experience of Third Avenue must be improved in order for downtown Seattle to continue to grow and prosper with increasing pedestrian activity, transit use and tourism.





Scope

This plan for Third Avenue addresses the seven blocks spanning from Blanchard Street to University Street. The plan provides a comprehensive inventory, analysis and evaluation of all physical, functional and social conditions within this area. Seven general recommendations are made that will help establish a new long term vision for Third Avenue. A design plan is provided to illustrate the

recommendations for the two blocks between Pike to Stewart Streets. Detailed block by block recommendations are also provided for the seven blocks. These recommendations outline improvements to roadway, sidewalks, intersections, pedestrian amenities, transit facilities, landscape, signage, and lighting. Finally, three steps are suggested to implement this plan.





History

Third Avenue has endured, if just barely, a history of neglect and stresses that continue to challenge its ability to thrive and contribute to the vitality of downtown Seattle. At one time it was a primary route for the extensive streetcar network. In 1985 it was selected as the best location for the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (i.e. the bus tunnel) and although this relieved the stress of extensive surface bus traffic, the construction process for the tunnel tore it apart in a way that its businesses have never fully recovered from. With the advent of the region's light rail project, Third Avenue was once again asked to assume a burden of extensive surface bus activity as the tunnel was converted to accommodate light rail trains. Extensive and generally successful efforts were taken to mitigate vehicular congestion. As a consequence, the bus priority operation of the street from 6-9AM and 3-6PM has not caused the massive traffic jams originally feared.

Unfortunately, the public pedestrian realm has never been adequately addressed in either the original tunnel construction or current light rail conversion project. Recently, because the demand for bus transit is so great, both Metro and the City of Seattle have decided to continue the surface bus priority operations after the tunnel reopens. Understandably the downtown business community has significant concerns about how this previously 'interim' solution needs to be improved to support a more successful permanent condition.

Process

Information was assembled through a combination of visual survey, recording and documentation as well as meetings and interviews with the primary stakeholders. Specific meetings included DSA, Third Avenue Task force, Seattle Department of Transportation, Metro King County and several private property owners as documented in the Appendix. The recommendations and design concepts were reviewed by a technical steering representing DPD, DSA, the Urban Mobility Group, SDOT (both street projects & way finding), Metro, and Belltown. The plan was then revised prior to a final draft presentation to a policy steering committee consisting of the Seattle Directors of Planning & Development and Transportation, Metro King County Bus System, Downtown Seattle Association, and key property owners along the Avenue. It is envisioned that some or all of the recommendations of this study will be more thoroughly explored.



Stakeholders

Urban streets are much more complex places than many people initially realize. The primary stakeholders in the creation and maintenance of Third Avenue as a great street are the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Metro Transit, the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA), and the adjacent property owners and businesses. The DSA involvement includes the Midtown Improvement District (MID) and Urban Mobility Group (UMG). However, at least ten other public agencies and private civic groups also have vested interests in different components of Third Avenue and need to be engaged in order for it to be significantly improved. These include agencies that provide utilities, economic development and neighborhood organizations.



MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES



Mission

Make Third Avenue a great street for both transit and retail.

Goals

- 1. Make Third Avenue a place where people want to be: inviting, accommodating, safe & beautiful.
- 2. Accommodate the best bus transit system possible: reliable, rapid, and comfortable.
- 3. Support vibrant and diverse retail activity.
- 4. Inspire permanent stewardship of the street by all participants.

Objectives

- 1. Improve the design, quality and conditions of all aspects of the public sidewalks.
- 2. Provide bus operations and waiting areas that are inviting, accommodating, safe and, most important of all, integrated into the whole activity of the Avenue.
- 3. Engage adjacent building owners/businesses to coordinate & improve street edges.

12 OBSERVATIONS

1 Physical

Third Avenue extends 25 blocks and almost two miles through the heart downtown Seattle from Pacific Science Center at Seattle Center to King Street Station in Pioneer Square. The blocks are either 240' or 360' long and the width of the right-of-way (ROW) varies slightly from 84' ROW south of Pike St. to 90' north of Pike Street. Sidewalks widths range from 20' at the post office & Benaroya hall to 16' north of Stewart St. where there is curb parking. The roadway is divided into four lanes, two in each direction. The grade of the Avenue is relatively level, which distinguishes it from First, Second, Fourth and Fifth Avenues which all have a noticeable 2-4% slope. The adjacent building heights range considerably from two to 30 stories, both office and residential.

2 Functional

Third Avenue connects the regional attractions of Seattle Center in the north to historic Pioneer Square in the south. It runs through the heart of the Belltown residential neighborhood, the downtown retail and office cores, and the City and County Civic Center. It directly connects two of Seattle's transit hubs (Westlake and King Street Station) and is only a quarter mile (5 minute walk) to the third at Coleman Dock. Third Avenue primarily functions as a priority bus corridor during morning and afternoon peak hours, at which times cars and service vehicles are not allowed. Bicycles are allowed at all times, although no designated lanes are provided. The central location and level grade also accommodate extensive cross and parallel pedestrian traffic between retail and civic activities to the east and the waterfront and Pike Place Market to the west.

Third Avenue does not provide an efficient circulation route through the city for either private autos or service vehicles because of the extensive bus activity. Curb parking is not provided south of Stewart Street due to limited right of way width and bus traffic. There are five curb cuts in the study area that access three parking garages and two loading docks. Although some use restrictions and modifications to these may be possible, all appear to be essential to the facilities they serve. There are four loading area 'pull outs' that are provided to serve adjacent retail uses. The specific use of these should be carefully evaluated and verified since these significantly reduce the available pedestrian area.



3 Development Potential

The seven block study area runs through five different zoning designations. These development regulations are relevant since they help inform the potential for redevelopment and associated pedestrian amenities that would be required. Since the downtown zoning was extensively modified in 2006, the current zoning is assumed to remain. Third Avenue is a designated pedestrian street with required specific street level uses and setback/blank wall restrictions on all new development. Speculating where new development might occur is imprecise due to a myriad of criteria that vary with different owners. However, based upon the current building area compared to potential development capacity, new development is can be expected at approximately six locations in the next few years. These locations include the following:

- *US Post office*
Redevelopment of western façade
240' frontage
- *Ross*
No plans according to owner, but conspicuously in need
180' parcel
DRC - 85'-180'
- *Third & Virginia*
SE corner - Bed Bath & Beyond
2/3 block
DOC2 - 500
- *Third & Virginia*
SW corner - U Park Building
120' frontage parcel
DMC-400
- *Third & Virginia*
(NE corner
180' parcel
DMC-400)
- *Third & Virginia*
NW - entire west side
360' parcel
DMC-400



4 Bus Stop Design

The predominant character of Third Avenue is established by the extensive bus activity and congested bus stops. Eight bus stops are located in the study area, four on each side of the street. These stops are the most heavy used in both downtown and the entire Metro System. Five of the stops have the ubiquitous brown steel and plywood shelters with internal lighting, benches and related information signs. Three stops (southbound at Virginia, Stewart and Benaroya Hall) provide overhead canopy protection from the adjacent building instead of the shelters. Benaroya Hall also provides leaning rails. A large percentage of the bus routes located on Third Avenue use either electric trolleys or Hybrid engine buses, both of which support adjacent pedestrian activity since they are relatively quiet and do not emit diesel fumes. The bus routes have been organized in a by-pass or skip stop operation with the stops arranged in an A/B pattern. Three of the seven blocks do not have bus stops on them.



5 Adjacent Buildings and Uses

Approximately 20 of the 40 buildings that define the edges of Third Avenue in the study area exhibit some historic qualities that contribute positively to the character of the avenue. While only three are currently designated Seattle historic landmarks (Mann Building, Olympic Tower, and Macy's), 13 more have recently been identified for further study. Six of these buildings are also noted in the book *Impressions of Imagination; Terra Cotta Seattle, 1986* as exhibiting distinctive Terra Cotta. Retail storefronts, restaurants and office lobbies provide pedestrian activity in addition to the bus riders. The study area contains an eclectic mix of over 50 restaurants and retail business and 15 building lobbies that also support positive activity. However, four conspicuous long blank wall conditions exist at the Post Office block, Ross, and on both sides of the Pine-Stewart block (Macy's). The mix of retail/restaurant uses range from restaurants serving the downtown lunch market (e.g. McDonald's, Subway, Starbucks, Harried & Hungry, Bruno's, Gelatiamo, Puck's, Vietnamese, Cosi) to drug stores, fine restaurants, and a diverse range of small retail such as Samuel Jewelry, rare coin gallery, two discount shoes stores. There are not any public or private open spaces adjacent Third Avenue in the study area.

“**TROUBLE ON THIRD**
Drug dealing and street crime have long been a problem along Third Avenue between Pike and Pine streets. But recent incidents – including a shooting – have made residents more nervous. Making the situation worse, say residents, are crowded bus stops that give dealers cover.”



6 Pedestrian Security

Criminal activity on Third Avenue has been highlighted in numerous recent newspaper articles and cartoons (see appendix). The precise number of incidents is less important than the widespread perception that Third Avenue is simply an unsafe place to be. Several businesses and offices have apparently begun to either lock Third Avenue entrances or instruct employees not to use them. The reasons for the social problems at this location are the result of a complex combination of influences that may include geography, adjacent uses, public transit, physical features and poor lighting. Some of the problems may simply be exacerbated by temporary construction scaffolding. Thoughtful design, quality materials, thorough maintenance and regular programming of public spaces can significantly improve their perceived safety. However, developing a comprehensive and enduring solution to the current problems on Third Avenue will require more detailed conversations and analysis between and by the stakeholders, urban designers, the Seattle Police Department and Metro Transit Police.

7 Sidewalk Width and Congestion

The 16' to 20' sidewalk widths throughout the study area generally provide adequate space for amenities, signage, landscape and walking circulation. This width is also just enough for a zone adjacent the storefronts for outdoor cafes; currently the only café is at The Blarney Stone Bar. However, significant sidewalk crowding and congestion does occur at all bus stops locations during the afternoon peak periods with the worst congestion northbound adjacent Macy's.



8 Sidewalks Paving and Amenities

The sidewalk paving is primarily poured concrete in the city standard 2'x2' grid. The paving is in average condition in most locations, but several locations noted in the block by block recommendations are in poor condition and should be replaced. Very few pedestrian amenities are provided except for those provided at bus stops. A few of newspaper vending machines, public telephones, trash receptacles, bike racks and two non-functioning drinking fountains are randomly located along the study area. There are no benches and the only public art is provided by the custom tree grates. Almost 50% of the sidewalks on the east side do offer overhead canopies protection but only about 20% of the west side provides canopies, primarily at Benaroya Hall. Pedestrian crosswalks are the painted edge outline type at Union, Stewart, Virginia, Lenora and Blanchard and the more visible and safe 'zebra stripe' crossings at University, Pike, and Pine.



9 Street Trees and Landscaping

There is a fairly regular pattern of healthy and mature street trees in the study area for most of five of the seven blocks. Street trees are most conspicuously missing in front of the Ross Building and in the two blocks between Pine and Virginia Streets. There are also gaps at the five curb cuts and four loading areas. The tree species vary from Little Leaf Lindens located south of Union St. to the Maples between Union and Pine Streets and Honey Locusts north of Virginia Street. There is practically no other planting provided in the study area. The location of areaways was recorded from the City database for the purpose of evaluating where new ground planted street trees could be provided. However, since the information is not verified and does it include how far into the right-of-way the areaway extends, it is inconclusive.



10 Signage

Three types of signs were observed: vehicular signs (directed to both buses and private vehicles and including parking regulations), Transit information signs, and commercial storefront signs. Most of the vehicular signs are focused on communicating the use restrictions and unfortunately communicate an unintended negative and unwelcoming message to pedestrians. The transit information signs are in various conditions, but generally old and tired looking. Metro is in the process of developing a new transit information sign system to be used downtown. Most of the commercial signs are relatively tasteful blade signs, frequently hung from canopies although several illegal sidewalk sandwich board signs were noted. A new bright red directory sign will be installed at the SE corner of 3rd and Pike under the city's wayfinding program.



11 Lighting

Four different types of lighting exist in the study area. Pedestrian lighting, transit shelter lighting, roadway lighting and lighting to and from adjacent retail and office lobbies. Each type exhibits a particular quantity, spacing and quality. None of the lighting is particularly noteworthy or interesting. The pedestrian lighting fixtures and/or bulb sources should be evaluated for consistent light distribution, color rendition and sustainability and updated if necessary.



12 Roadway

The roadway is generally 46' wide and divided into two lanes in each direction which allow buses to pass each other in the 'skip stop' operations. Two loading zone pullout are provided on each side of the street in the downtown section. Adjacent Macy's the roadway is 54' wide, 8 feet more that appears to be needed. Parallel curb parking is provided on both sides of the street north of Stewart Street.



7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study suggest that the time for subtle and incremental improvements Third Avenue has long since passed and more bold steps are required to reclaim it as a great place for pedestrians to be. Consequently, seven specific recommendations are proposed to dramatically and conspicuously improve the overall function and appearance of Third Avenue. A design concept has been developed for the two blocks from Pike to Stewart Streets to illustrate the application of the recommendations. Specific detailed recommendations are also proposed for the each and every block on the following plans and elevations. The recommendations assume that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Seattle, Metro and DSA will be implemented. The MOU addresses traffic control signage, police presence, lighting, trash collections and cleaning, urban design study and monitoring of the conditions on Third Avenue (see Appendix).

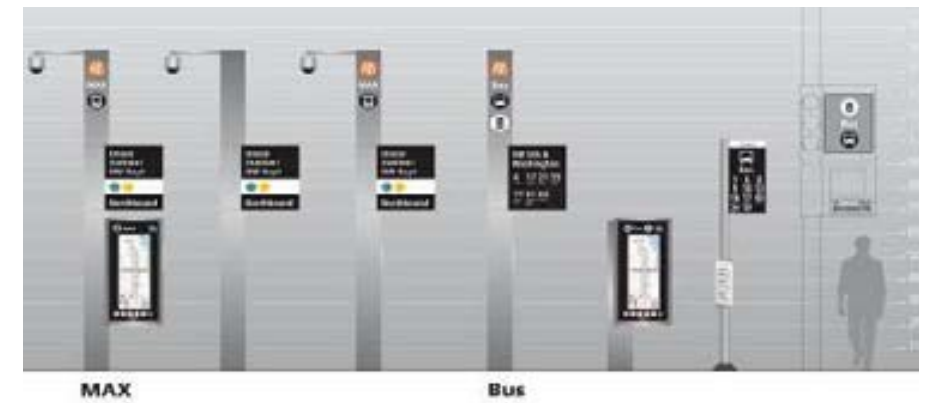


1 Bus Shelters

Integrate the bus stop waiting areas with the other retail and walking activity on Third Avenue by removing the five curb side bus shelters and minimizing associated 'clutter' in the sidewalks. Provide weather protection and waiting space at these locations with new or renovated glass canopies and a consistent and uniformly designed leaning rail/bench design located at the building edge throughout the corridor. However, it is encouraged that the materials would vary to match or be an improvement from those of adjacent buildings. It is extremely important that only high quality materials such as stainless steel and granite are used. The objective is to integrate these features as architectural elements and building amenities and consequently strengthen the stewardship of abutting owners and businesses of the street. New transit information signs should remain at the curb locations should be equally high quality, lighted contemporary design and materials. Implementation of this recommendation will require respectful and strategic coordination with the adjacent property owners and businesses. See appendix for a more complete analysis of the issue and problems associated with the current bus shelter configuration

2 Coordinated Sign Program

An extremely thoughtful, sophisticated and consistent informational signage solution is required for Third Avenue to function as both a great street and facilitate rapid and reliable bus operations during peak periods. The interim signs installed emphasize what is not allowed (e.g. DO NOT ENTER) rather than what IS allowed. These signs also add to the confusing and visual clutter of the street. Unfortunately, the recently proposed blank out signs electronic signs will exacerbate this uninviting atmosphere as a solution more common of a highway environment than a pedestrian oriented street. A more appropriate and coordinated graphic information solution that 'brands' the street with high quality pedestrian and transit signs is recommended. The emphasis of this solution should be who IS allowed to use the street and when. A dramatic and sophisticated visual icon at the boundaries of the bus priority zones combined with a coordinated system of blade signs on existing poles is recommended.



3 Glass Canopies

The number of building edge canopies should be expanded to provide continuous coverage along Third Avenue, where possible, thus 'branding' it as the best downtown street to walk during bad weather. New canopies should be simple and contemporary designs that complement the building. Canopies should include glass panels and lighting. Realizing this recommendation will required development of a detailed strategy and program to coordinate with and provide appropriate incentives to adjacent property owners and businesses

4 Landscape

Provide a new, dramatic and abundantly verdant landscaping theme with new street trees where none exist, large raised planting areas, surface planters at curb and building edges and hanging baskets on both street poles and adjacent buildings. Large raised planting beds should be installed wherever they do not restrict bus waiting or loading areas. Large surface planters should be used wherever areaways restrict subsurface planting, including street tree planters. A detailed landscaping program should address crime and maintenance issues as best possible without conceding the fundamental objective. The landscape design should be developed to maximize use of canopy and surface rainwater runoff for irrigation. A comprehensive landscape maintenance program must be developed to sustain long term care.



5 Sidewalk Improvements

Improve the quality and consistency of the sidewalk paving and amenities (benches, newspaper and bike racks, trash receptacles, lighting, information signs, drinking fountains). The sidewalk area should be widened between Pike and Stewart Streets. Service loading zones should be modified to integrate the surface with sidewalk when not in use by means of a rolled curb and delineated zone that visually blends with sidewalk area. Crosswalks should be highlighted with stamped and colored concrete. Benches should be provided at non bus stop areas. All furnishings should be high quality materials and contemporary design. Solar powered trash compacting receptacles should be evaluated to minimize maintenance. Pedestrian oriented lighting should be completed in an even pattern and distribution throughout Third Avenue.



6 Storefront improvements

A program to successfully engage and realize critical improvements to the building edge conditions adjacent Third Avenue needs to be developed and implemented. Specific recommendations are provided in the Block by Block analysis following this section. Three significant improvements are strongly recommended for the east side of University - Union Streets (transit tunnel entrance, parking garage and US Post Office), the Ross Dress for Less building and both sides of the Pine – Stewart block (Macy's and Macy's Garage).



7 Public Art

Develop a program to engage public artists and art projects toward helping create Third Avenue as a special place is recommended. Examples include using frit patterns, colored and/or dichroic glass on the canopies. Solar powered light block pavers, recently installed in the Columbia Park renovation, should also be explored as a cost effective method to add visual interest and useful function to the sidewalk.

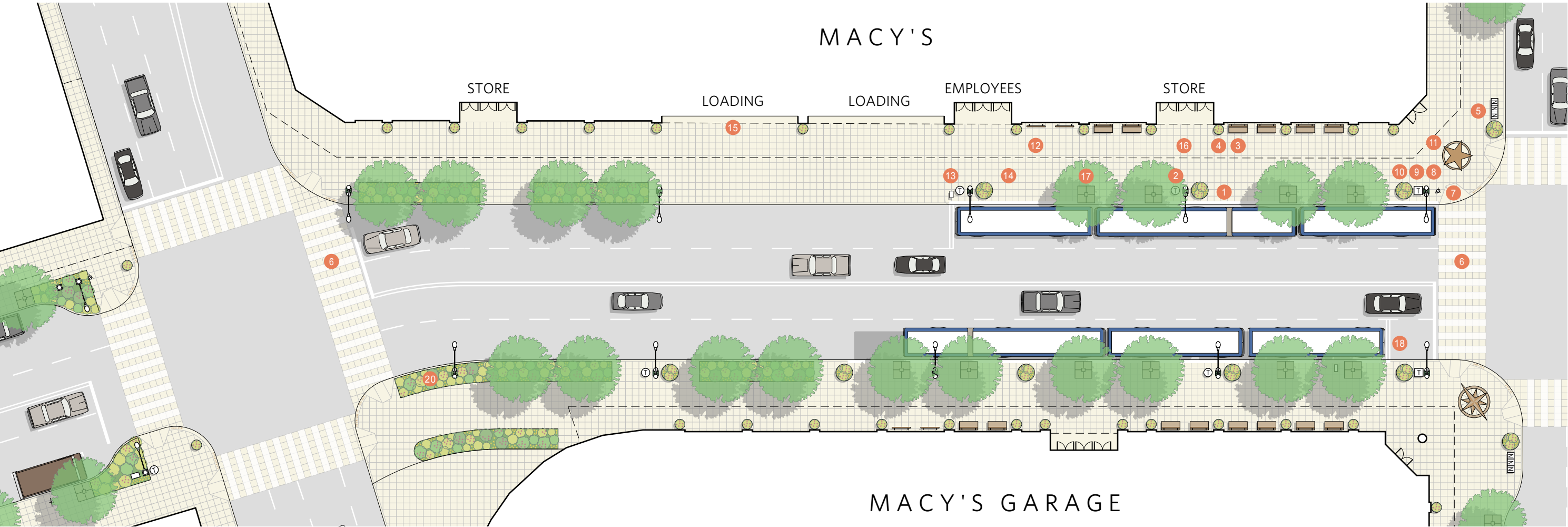


3 STEP IMPLEMENTATION

Three implementation actions are suggested to realize the recommended improvements. These steps provide both immediate action and enduring stewardship.

1. Amend the MOU to include a commitment and/or 'contingent relationship' agreement between the City, Metro, Sound Transit, and DSA to make Third Avenue a great place and designate it as one of the Great Places Symposium pilot projects to highlight at the 2008 Great Places Conference in Seattle. (Sept 2007)
2. Designate DPD/SDOT as an interim lead agency to complete recommended planning tasks (Sept- Dec 2007)
 - a. Complete the planning phase by studying Third Avenue from Denny Way to Jackson Street (geographic identities, design, transit issues, etc).
 - b. Coordinate with other Center City projects and strategies (e.g. Pike/Pine corridor).
 - c. Coordinate with Metro's new transit information system graphic design program.
 - d. Meet with Seattle Police Department and Metro Police to coordinate and refine design recommendations.
 - e. Begin outreach and discussions with adjacent property owners and businesses to better involve and invest them in the final solutions.
 - f. Develop a public art program.
 - g. Develop preliminary cost estimates to evaluate alternatives and phasing with an emphasis on the most meaningful and significant first phase actions.
3. Establish an innovative, private/public implementation program by creating or engaging a private organization to manage, design, finance, construct, program and maintain Third Avenue with the participation of all the stakeholder agencies and organizations.
 - a. Prepare design documents including sidewalk, landscape and amenity plans, details and cost estimates.
 - b. Coordinate with new Metro transit information system graphic design program and ST and City wayfinding programs.
 - c. Collaborate with artists under a Third Avenue public art program.
 - d. Secure support and funding from adjacent property owners and tenants (both bus stop + non-bus stop locations).
 - e. Develop budget, funding & phasing plan.
 - f. Coordinate and manage construction.

DESIGN GUIDELINES



Sidewalk improvements and amenities

- 1

widen sidewalk by 6'
- 2

trash receptacles
- 3

new bench/leaning rail
- 4

planters (3' diameter)
- 5

newspaper housing
- 6

high visibility colored/stamped concrete crosswalk
- 7

ADA compliant ramp
- 8

Seattle Roadway lamp with Pedestrian light
- 9

Trash compactor (corner locations only)
- 10

Large planter (5' diameter)
- 11

Public Art – related to adjacent business*
- 12

Leaning rail
- 13

Transit information
- 14

2'x2' concrete paving**
- 15

Decorative bronze screen gates
- 16

Continuous glass overhead canopy
- 17

New street trees with custom tree grate***
- 18

Bus stop set back from retail corner exposure
- 19

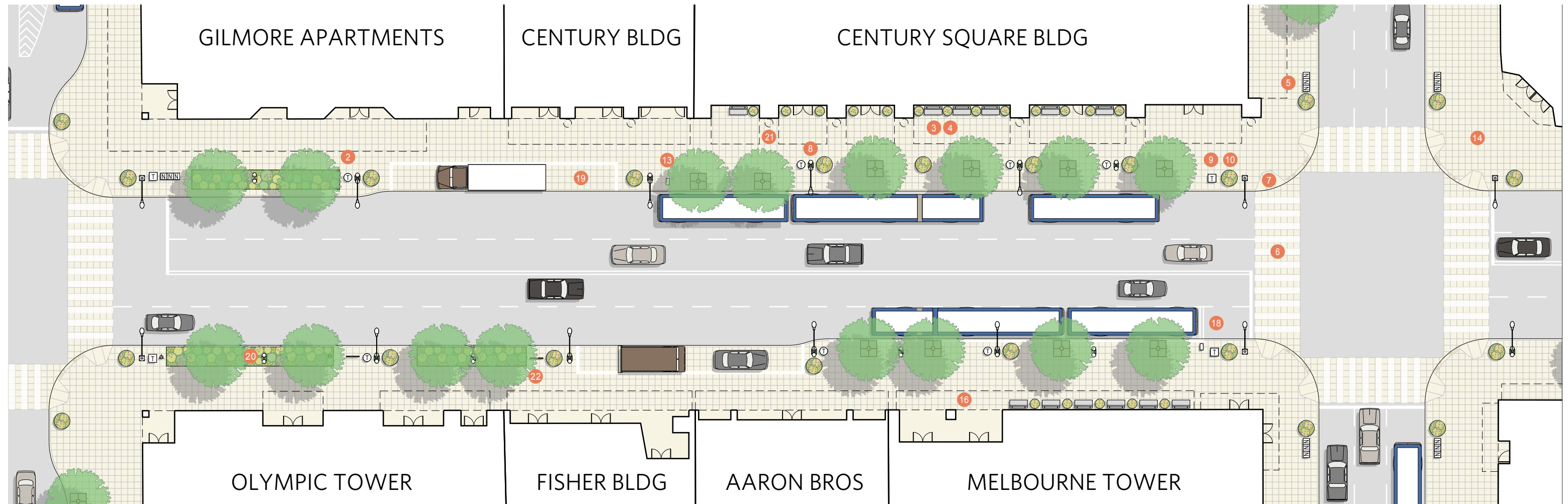
Rolled curb loading zone
- 20

Planting
- 21

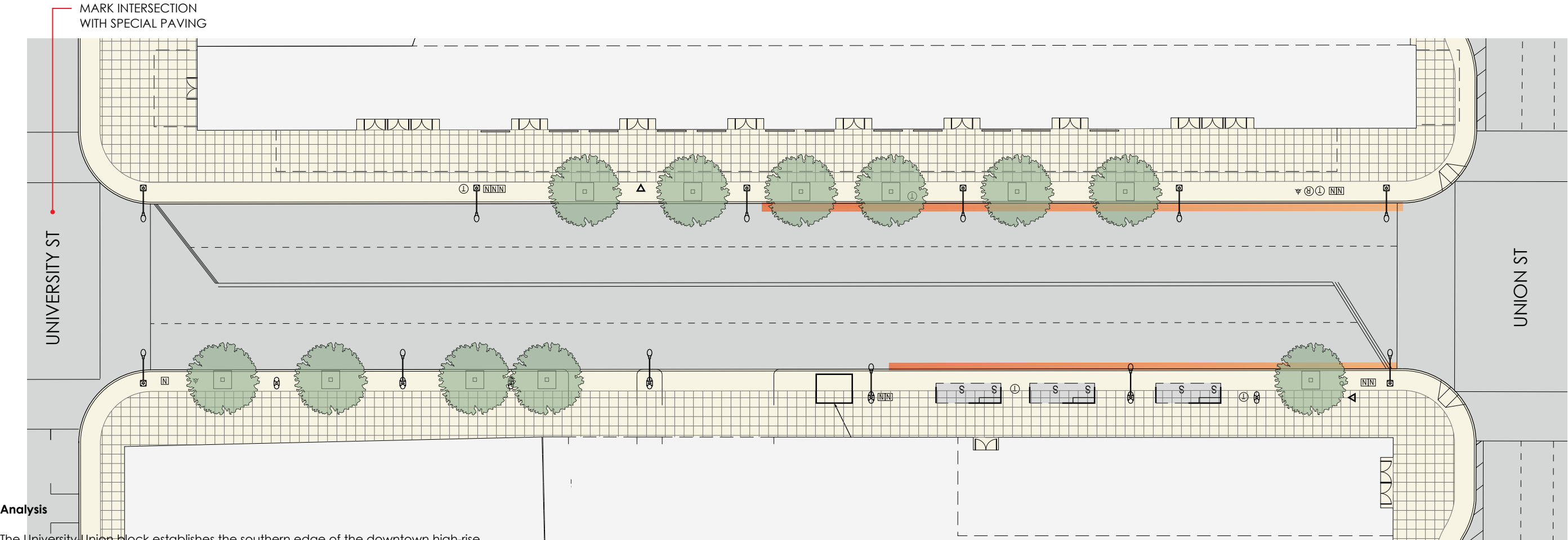
Hanging flower basket
- 22

Bike rack
- *
- **
- ***

species to be determined



APPENDIX: BLOCK BY BLOCK ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The University Union block establishes the southern edge of the downtown high-rise office core zone (DOC 1 -450'). Current adjacent uses include an entrance to the downtown transit tunnel, a parking structure, the main downtown US Postal office and Benaroya Hall (Seattle Symphony). The University St. intersection marks an important connection to the waterfront adjacent the Symphony Hall, Seattle Art Museum and down Harbor Steps. Although both street corners provide entrances to the transit tunnel, neither entrance is adequately visible. The west side entrance is substantially hidden within the Benaroya Hall and the east entrance is practically hidden behind a concrete wall of the parking structure. Improvements to Benaroya hall are not practical. However, it appears that some key improvements to the eastern entrance, which more directly serves the downtown office core, could significantly benefit of both Third Avenue and the station.

1. Open up the corner concrete wall at University Street. transit tunnel entrance to be more transparent. Replace canvas canopy with glass canopies and more dramatic lighting and entrance signage.
2. Modify the blank wall in front of the garage parking stalls to accommodate a narrow retail frontage, or if infeasible at least landscaping.
3. Close the loading dock grill during day time hours and restrict all unnecessary use by autos. The grill should be considered for artful improvements, preferably using lighting, color and higher quality materials.
4. Provide and use a decorative grill to cover the US Post office loading dock.
5. Remove the new Metro Transit Supervisor's booth
6. Remove bus shelters and add glass canopies, landscape, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements as per the general recommendations.
7. Maintain and increase if possible, US Post Office entrances directly onto Third Avenue. Work with USPS to better integrate retail into lobby space and manage any undesirable bus waiting inside lobby.

West Side Recommendation

UNIVERSITY-UNION: EAST



REMOVE SHELTER STRUCTURE AND
COORDINATE DESIGN WITH POST
OFFICE RENOVATION

REMOVE
SUPERVISOR
BOOTH

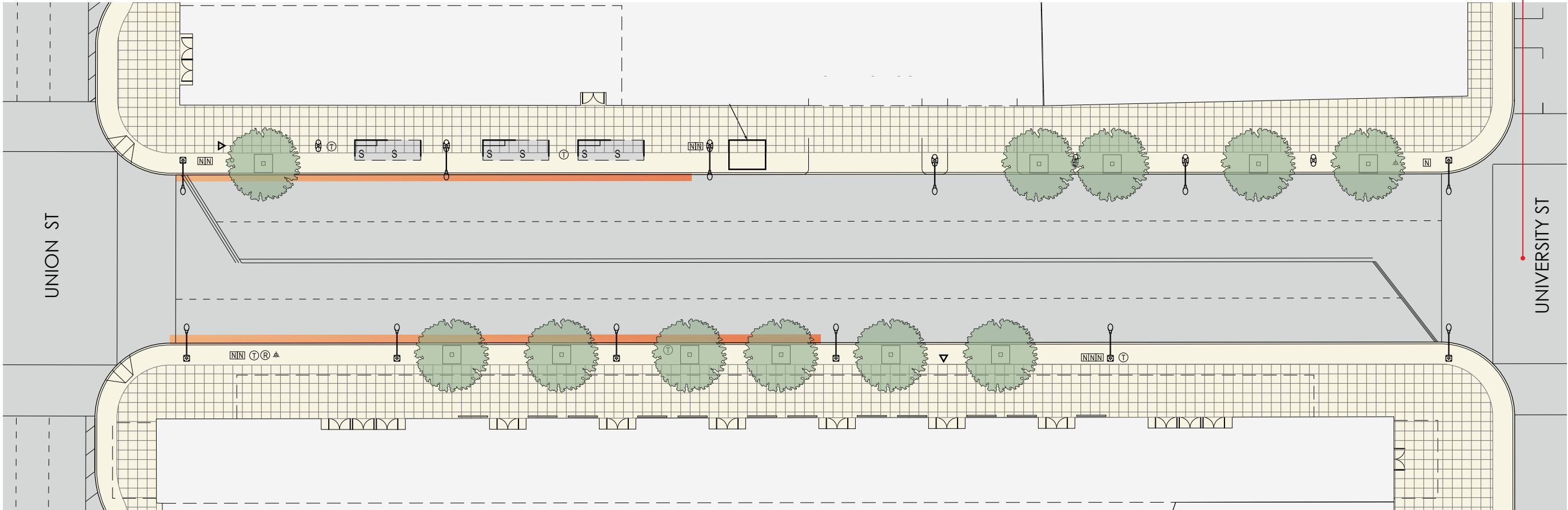
ADD
DECORATIVE
GRILL.

RESTRICT USE TO
ESSENTIAL LOADING
ACTIVITIES ONLY.

CONVERT PARKING BAY
BEHIND TO RETAIL.

OPEN UP LIGHT RAIL STATION ENTRANCE WITH
GLASS & LIGHT. ADD GLASS CANOPY. MARK
CORNER BUILDING WITH LIGHT.

MARK INTERSECTION
WITH SPECIAL PAVING



1. Increase the number of unlocked access points between the sidewalk and the interior retail uses.

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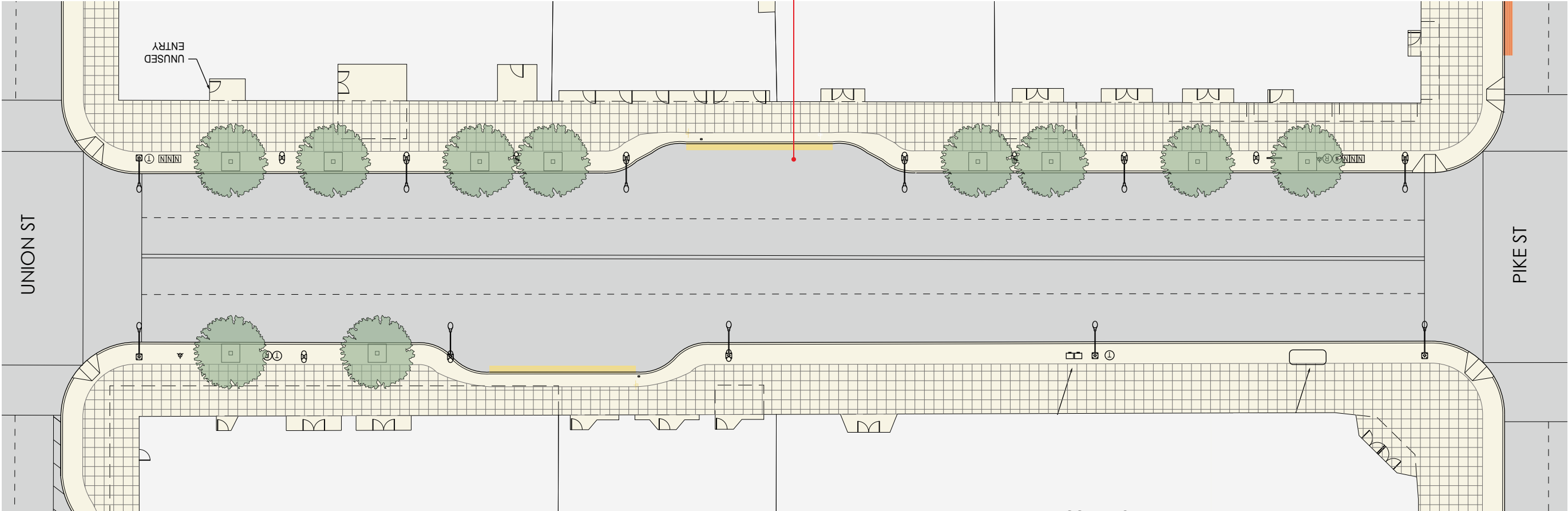
PIKE-UNION: WEST



ENCOURAGE OUTDOOR CAFES AND ADD GLASS CANOPIES AND BLADE SIGNS

ADD GLASS CANOPIES AND BLADE SIGNS

REDESIGN LOADING ZONE



Analysis

The Union-Pike block sits at the edge of the Downtown Retail Core in a zoning area that limits building heights to 150' provided that residential uses are included. This block does not contain any bus stops. Three buildings establish the east side of the street edge (Joseph Vance Office building, 1929) a three story brick office building, and the Ross Building, (1939)). Four buildings establish the western edge of the block (Mann Building, 1926; 1423 Third, a three story office building and The Kress Building, 1923). The Mann building is a designated Seattle historic landmark building. Four of these buildings (The Vance, Ross, Mann and Kress) are noted in the book Impressions of Imagination: Terra Cotta Seattle as exhibiting quality examples of Terra Cotta. The buildings host a eclectic variety of ground level uses ranging from a popular restaurant (Wild Ginger) to local and national lunch spots, an independent jeweler, drug store and national discount clothier (Ross).

East Side Recommendations

The southern portion of the east side contains interesting detailed building edge with two mature Maple trees on the sidewalk adjacent the Vance Building. The middle building has recently been renovated to reveal and improve the brick façade. The Subway sandwich shop, jewelry store, and office lobby entrance all contribute modestly to an attractive and interesting pedestrian experience. The significant issue on this block, and for the entire study area, exists along the 180' half block length of the Ross Building. Albeit, the building provides attractive rhythm of window and detail at upper levels, the sidewalk edge of storefront windows is not adequately maintained and contains empty and scratched windows, faded displays posters, graffiti 'tags'. The sidewalk, already void of trees, lights, or other amenities is only made worse by the infamous presence of the decrepit 'Frank Turco' news stand and two lone public phone booths. Recommended improvements to the east side include:

1. Provide new glass canopies, paving and crosswalk, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, and public art improvements where needed, as per the general recommendations.
2. Remove phone booths.
3. Remove the existing news stand and replace it with a new vending kiosk design coordinated with other urban elements.
4. Clean and activate the storefront displays of the Ross Building.
5. Reconfigure loading pull out with rolled curb access and paving to match and integrate with sidewalk. Delineate loading area with pavers.
6. Provide outdoor café seating at Gelatiamo.



REMOVE NEWSSTAND AND
INSTALL NEW NEWS KIOSK

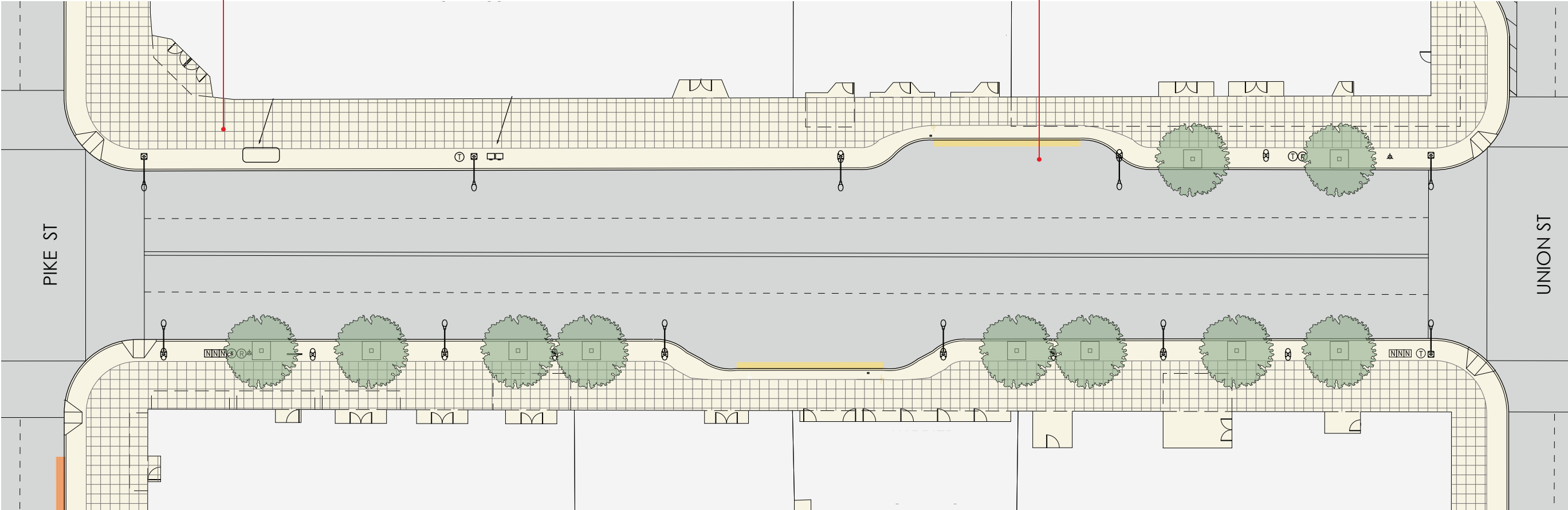
ADD NEW
SIDEWALK PAVING

ADD LANDSCAPE
PLANTERS AND
STREET TREES

REMOVE PHONE
BOOTH

REVITALIZE STOREFRONT DISPLAYS
AND ADD GLASS CANOPY WITH
LIGHTING AND ADD BLADE SIGNS

REDESIGN LOADING ZONE



West side recommendations

Similar to the University-Union block, the west side of Union-Pike block is significantly better than the east side with only minor deficiencies. The windows and lighting of the otherwise positive Wild Ginger restaurant are unusually dark, which unfortunately hides the activity inside. Other than this, the blocks provide numerous variety of building entries and storefronts. Some retail is either vacant or the uses do not contribute to the vitality of the street, but this temporary condition would likely improved if the quality of the street was improved. Recommended improvements to the west side include:

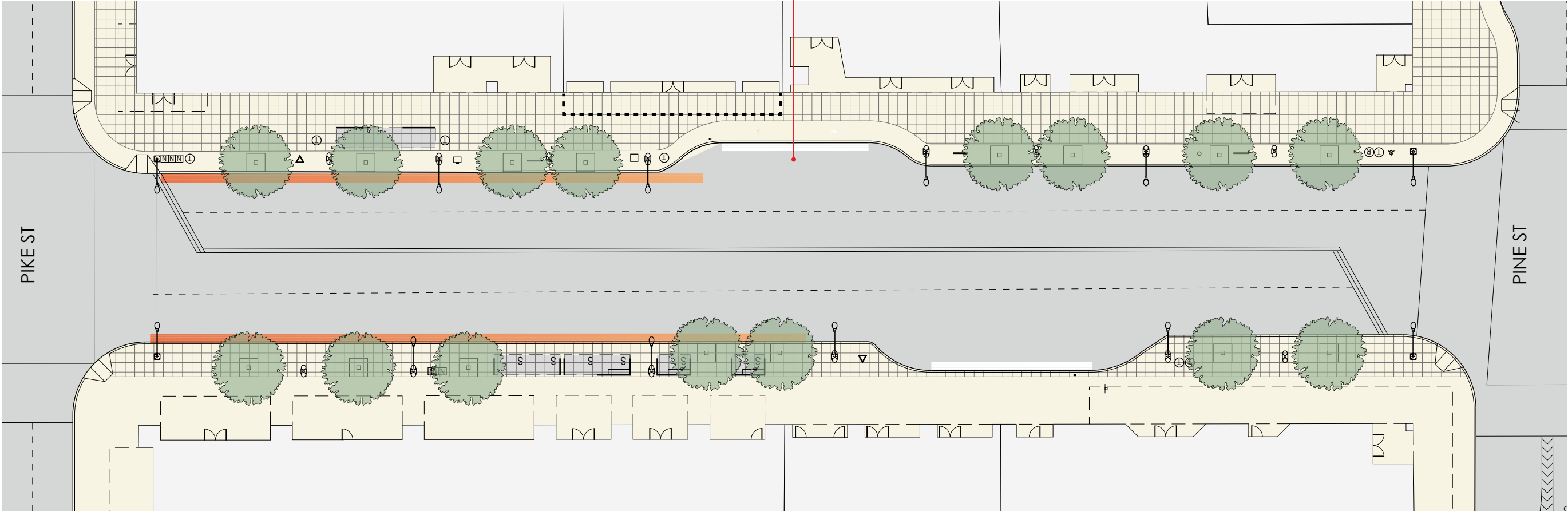
1. Research options to increase transparency through the 'dark' windows at Wild Ginger.
2. Add outdoor sidewalk café tables at Wild Ginger.
3. Reconfigure loading pull out with rolled curb access and paving to match & integrate with sidewalk. Delineate loading area with pavers.
4. Add glass canopies, lighting and blade signs along entire block frontage consistent with the general recommendations.
5. Add landscape, sidewalk improvements and public art projects consistent with the general recommendations.



REMOVE SHELTERS AND INSTALL LEANING
RAILS WITH GLASS CANOPY

REDESIGN LOADING AREA

ADD GLASS CANOPIES AND
BLADE SIGNS



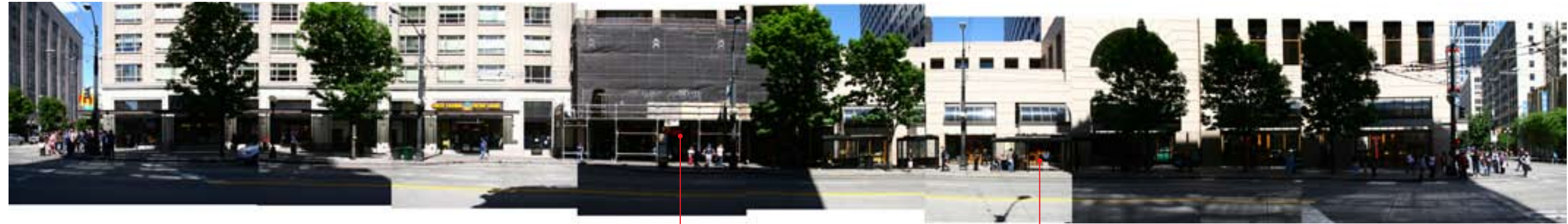
Analysis

The Pike Pine block of Third Avenue is also in the downtown retail core zoning area. Three building establish the east side of the street (Century Square Office tower, a brick office building and the Gilmore apartment building) and four buildings on the west side (Melbourne House, Aaron Framing, the Fisher Studio Building, and the Olympic Tower). The Olympic Tower building is a designated Seattle historic landmark and the Fisher Studio was recently nominated. In addition , The Melbourne House is also noted in the terra cotta book and architecturally significant. The adjacent retail includes a two discount shoe stores, a food court, smoke shop, check cashing outlet, McDonald's, Drug Store, beauty shop, art shop, and spa.

East Side Recommendations

The type and quality of the adjacent uses is generally supportive to a good pedestrian environment. Frequent building and store entries exist and canopy coverage is provided for most of the block. Seven mature and well maintained Maple trees exist. Despite these positive physical conditions, this block is serious crime on the block is increasing and recently the focus of a newspaper article (see Appendix). The high volumes, service areas and configuration of the bus stops all appear to be contributing to this problem. Recommendations include:

1. Remove bus shelters and add glass canopies, benches/leaning rails, landscape, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, as per the general recommendations.
2. Reconfigure loading pull out with rolled curb access and paving to match and integrate with sidewalk. Delineate loading area with pavers.

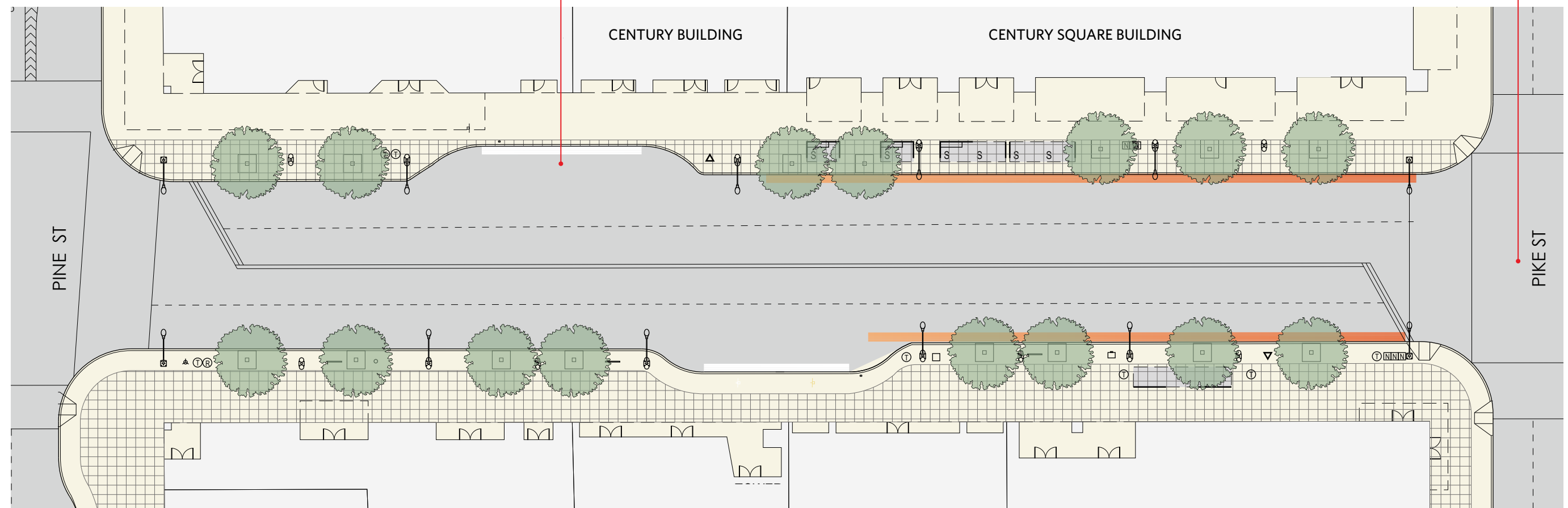


REMOVE AND/OR REPAVE LOADING ZONE.
ADD STREET TREES.

ADD GLASS CANOPY
AND BLADE SIGNS

REMOVE SHELTERS AND INSTALL LEANING
RAILS AND LANDSCAPE

MARK INTERSECTION
WITH SPECIAL PAVING



West Side Recommendations

The west side of the street provides similar positive physical features as the east side yet is plagued by the same social problems. Again, mature street trees and generally clean and well design sidewalk is provided. The problem appears to be due to the characteristics of the particular bus stop design and operations at this location. Recommendations include:

1. Remove bus shelters and add glass canopies, benches/leaning rails, landscape, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements as per the general recommendations.
2. Reconfigure loading pull out with rolled curb access and paving to match & integrate with sidewalk. Delineate loading area with pavers.

DRAFT

STEWART-PINE: EAST

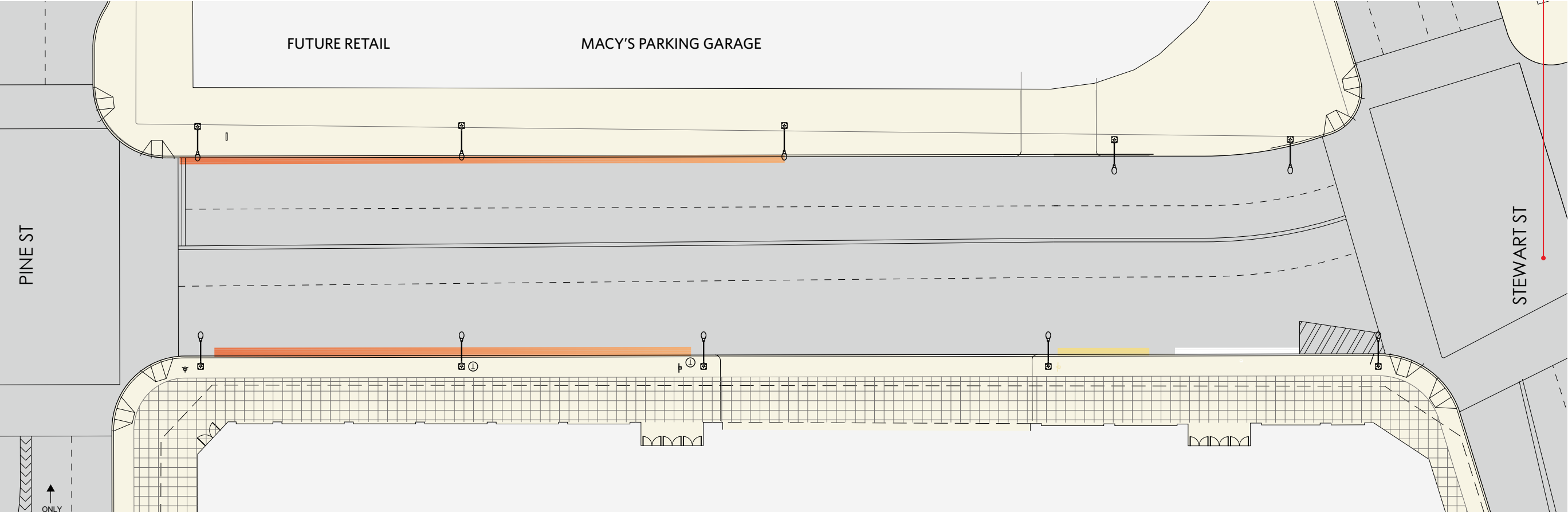


ADD GLASS CANOPY
AND BLADE SIGNS

REMOVE CURB CUT AND
REDIRECT PARKING EXIT

ADD EASTBOUND LANE

MARK INTERSECTION
WITH SPECIAL PAVING



Analysis

The Pine- Stewart block is the third and northern most block in the study area in the downtown retail core zone. Although this designation has little significance on the east side since of the Macy's department store, it may be relevant to the current development plans of the Macy's Parking Garage development site on the west side, if the detailed design has not been completed. The Macy's building is a designated Seattle historic landmark building. The status of, and design for the Parking garage redevelopment needs to be determined.

East Side Recommendations

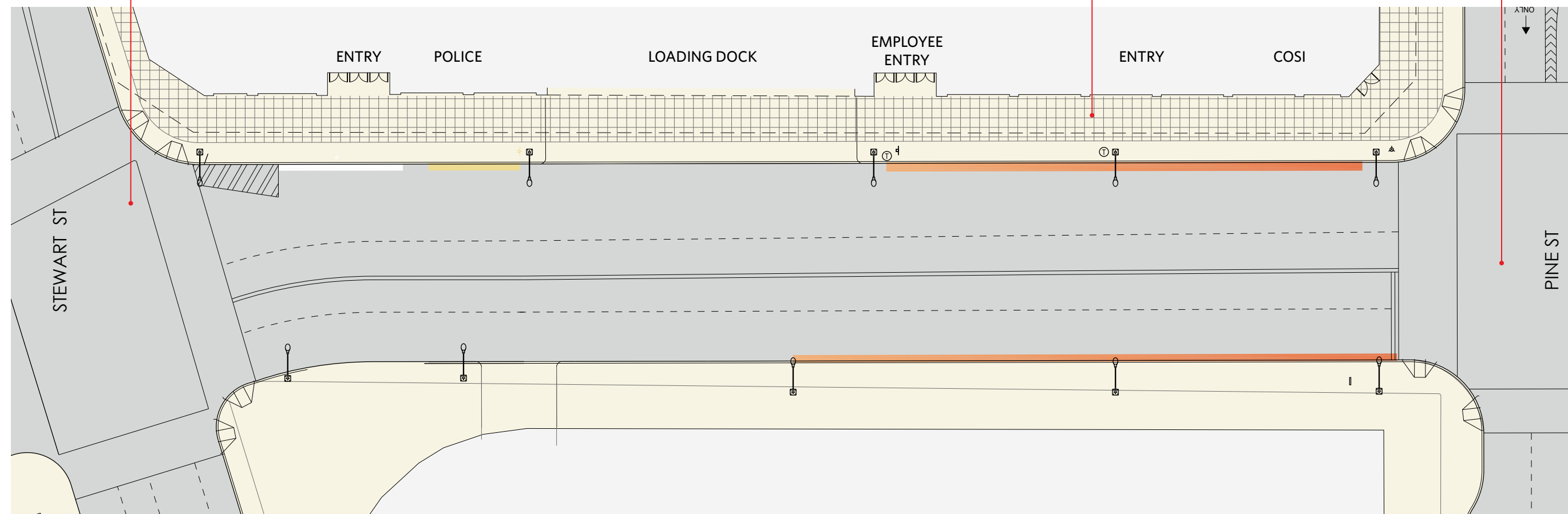
The east side is functionally divided into a north and south zones. The southern zone contains an extremely busy and congested bus stop and entrances to Macy's department store. The northern zone contains the Macy's loading dock, an additional Macy's entrance and reflective mirror storefront assigned to the police. The sidewalk condition is in below average and no street trees or transit shelters are provided. The roadway paving appears to be approximately eight feet wider than on adjacent blocks as necessary for the bus operations. Recommendations include:

1. Reconfigure the bus stop design to provide the leaning rails/benches under the existing canopy. Explore possibility of installing glass panel in the existing canopy.
2. Widen the sidewalk area by six feet and install landscaping, benches/leaning rails, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Reconfigure entry to remove steps and generally improve transparency and access into Cosi café
4. Design and install new 'artful' bronze/painted steel loading dock gates.
5. Remove mirrored glass police window and reactivate as storefront display.

STEWART-PINE: EAST



- RENEW PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
- REMOVE MIRROR GLASS AND INSTALL ACTIVE STOREFRONT DISPLAY
- DESIGN AND INSTALL NEW 'ARTFUL' LOADING DOCK GATES WITH AMPLE LIGHT
- EXPLORE OPPORTUNITY/FEASIBILITY OF INSTALLING GLASS PANELS IN HISTORIC CANOPY
- WIDEN SIDEWALK AND ADD STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPE
- INSTALL LEANING RAILS FOR BUS WAITING
- MARK INTERSECTION WITH SPECIAL PAVING
- RECONFIGURE ENTRY AND REMOVE STEPS TO CAFE



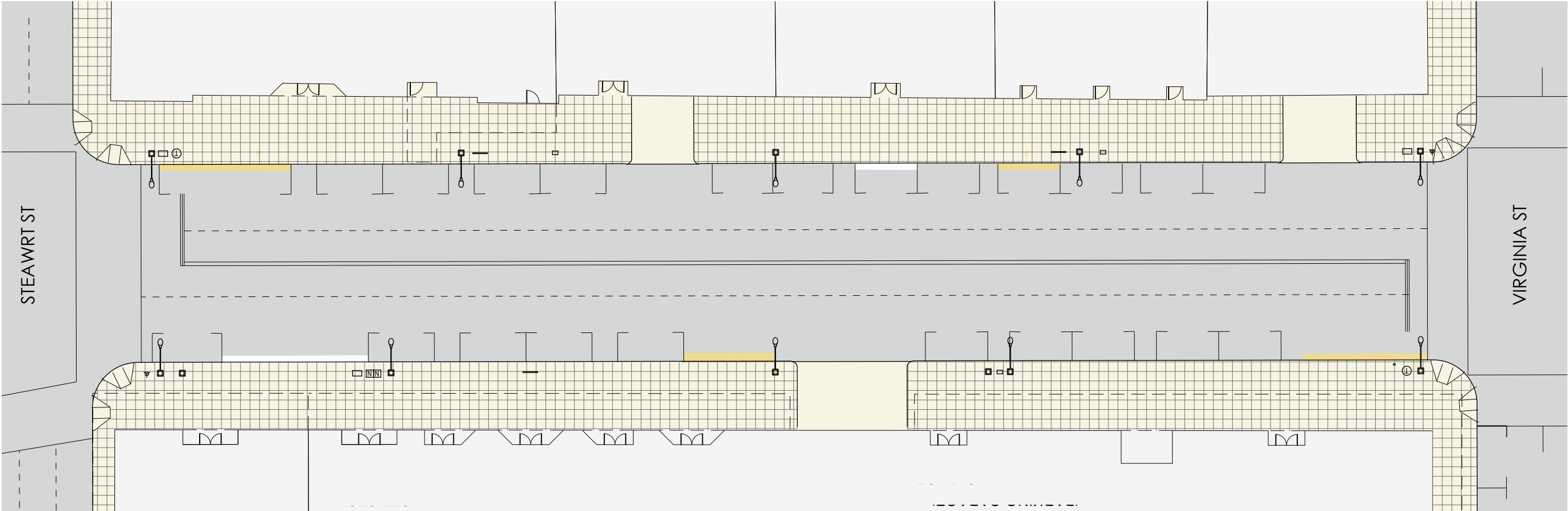
West side

The west side retail frontage is currently with opaque boarded storefronts. A new design for this frontage should incorporate the following recommendations.

1. Reconfigure the bus stop design to provide glass canopy with bench and leaning rails.
2. Widen the sidewalk area by two feet and install glass canopies, landscaping, benches sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Remove the parking exit curb cuts on Third Avenue by redirecting exits to Stewart Street and provide a single east bound 'contra flow' lane.
4. Design and install a substantial landscape gateway design feature at the north edge.

DRAFT

VIRGINIA-STEWART: WEST



Analysis

There are several significant changes to Third Avenue north of Stewart Street. Most notably, a shift in the street grid occurs at Stewart Street where Third Avenue transitions from downtown retail core to the Belltown urban residential neighborhood. The bus priority area begins at Stewart. Approximately 60% of the routes turn, enter/exit on to Third Avenue at either Stewart or Virginia. North of Stewart surface parallel parking spaces are also introduced, reducing the sidewalk width slightly. Both the DSA and MID boundaries extend for two blocks past Stewart to Lenora but not to the last block of this study area at Blanchard. A single bus stop is provided on each side of the street between Virginia and Lenora.

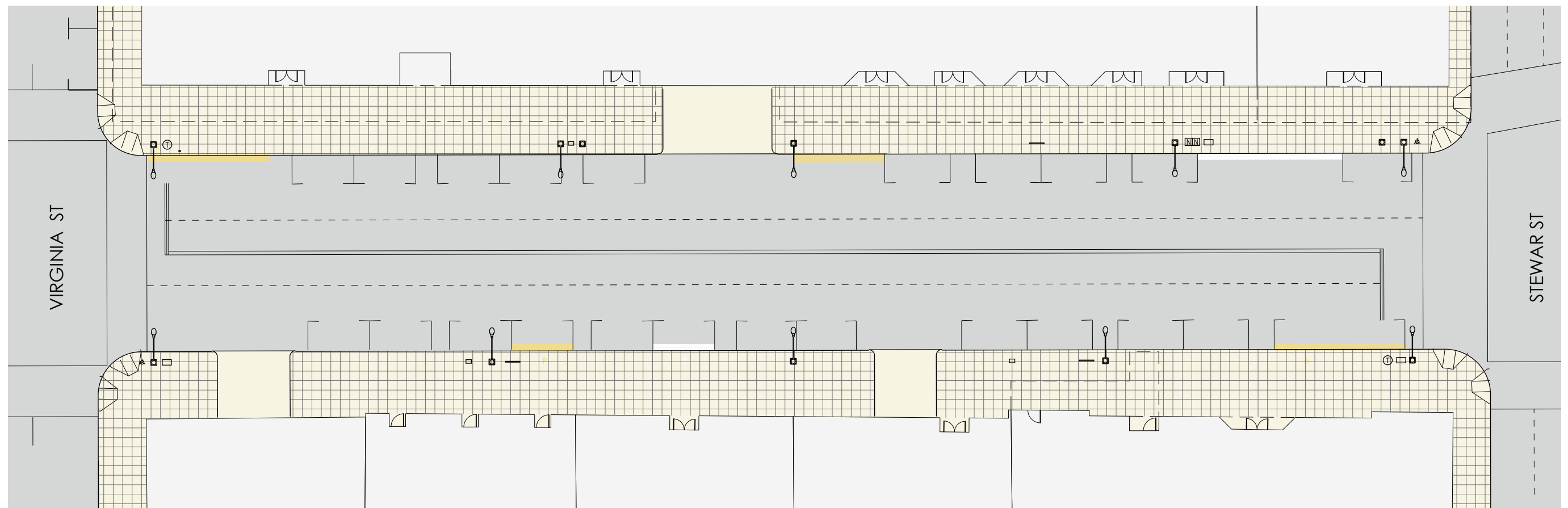
The Stewart -Virginia block is defined on the east side by Downtown Office Core 2 zoning on the east side, which allows heights up to 500' and Downtown Mixed Commercial zoning on the west side, which allows heights up to 400.' Two existing buildings establish the east side; Securities Building and the Bed, Bath & Beyond Building. The Securities building was recently nominated for landmark preservation status. Four buildings establish the west side of the street: Bergman Luggage, a 6 story building, the Hadden Hall apartment building, a three story building; and a two level parking garage.

East Side Recommendations

The edge of the east side is characterized by retail shops, several that are currently vacant, and a parking garage. The dominant building facade above the sidewalk for most of the block is the parking garage structure and negatively contributes to the character. No street trees are present despite the city database indicating subsurface areaways only at the southern most 60' section of the sidewalk. A 20' wide parking garage entry/exit is located approximately 1/2 way along the block. Recommended improvements include:

- 1. Install glass canopy panels in existing canopy, street trees, landscaping, benches sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
- 2. Add curb bulbs and landscaping at both intersections
- 3. Add pedestrian light fixtures

VIRGINIA-STEWART: EAST

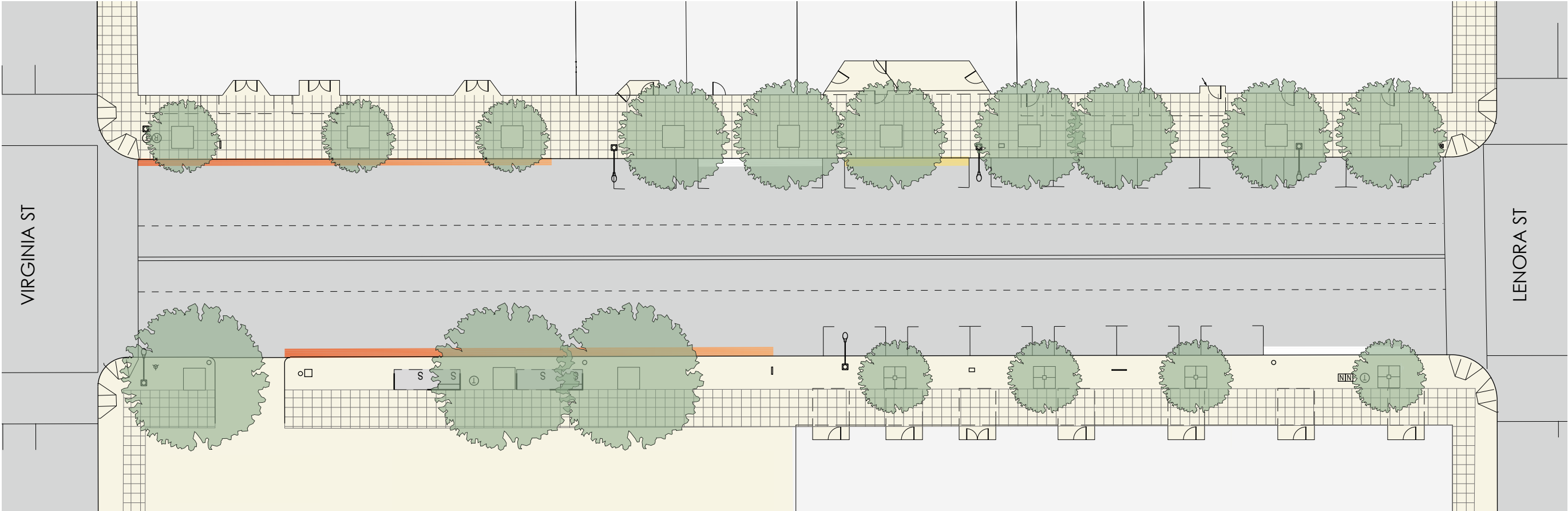
**West Side Recommendations**

The buildings on the east side provide interesting character and scale and host a greater diversity of businesses than the west side. Both the southern and northern corners are expected to be redeveloped in near future due to underutilized capacity. Recommended improvements include:

1. Install glass canopies, street trees, landscaping, benches sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
2. Add curb bulbs and landscaping at both intersections
3. Add pedestrian light fixtures.
4. Screen the parking garage entry at the northern end.
5. Add retail storefronts at the Self Storage building.

DRAFT

LENORA-VIRGINIA: WEST



Analysis

The Virginia-Lenora Block is also in the Downtown Mixed Commercial zoning area up to 400' heights. The east side of the street contains both an empty development parcel and the new YWCA building. The YWCA building includes glass canopies over each of the seven entries/storefronts. A 42 story mixed use residential building is planned for the corner, however there is not a current master use permit on file for this project. Five single and two story buildings establish the west side of the block. Redevelopment of this entire block face is likely in the next couple years, subject to the ability to consolidate ownership.

East Side Recommendations

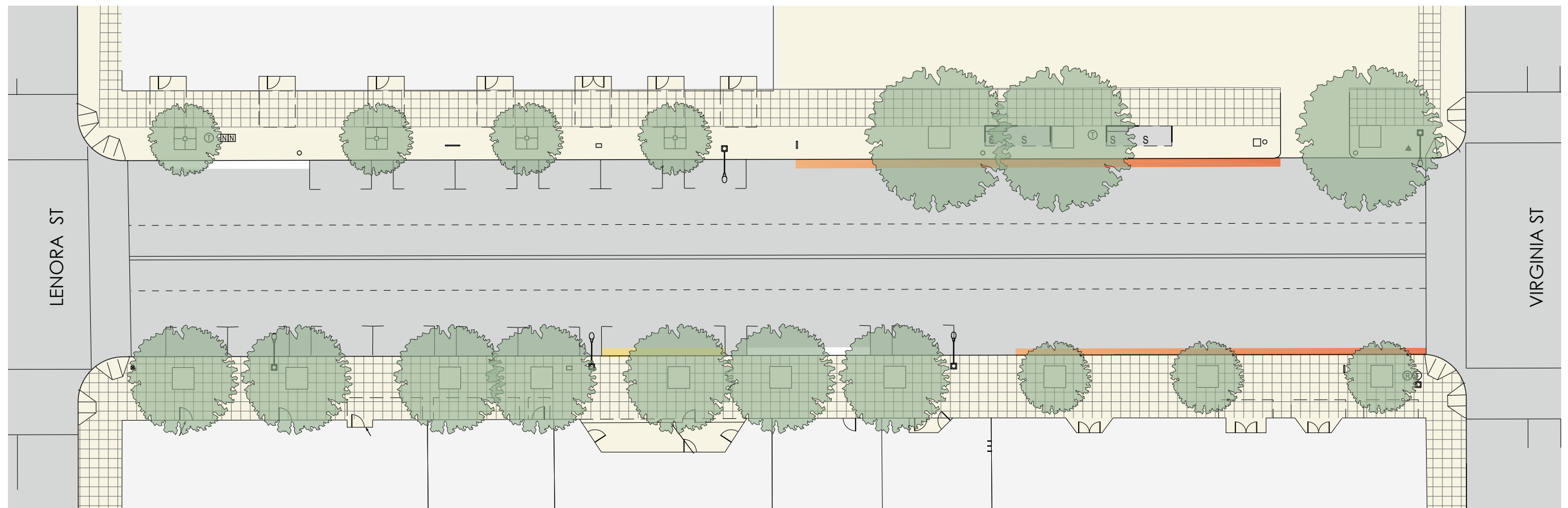
1. Preserve the Honey Locust street trees.
2. Install landscaping, benches, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Confirm that new development will be required to provide a glass canopy
4. Add curb bulbs with landscaping at both intersections.
5. Add pedestrian light fixtures.

LENORA-VIRGINIA: EAST



REMOVE SHELTERS AND PROVIDE TEMPORARY GLASS CANOPIES WITH LEANING RETAIL AT BACK OF SIDEWALK

ADD CURB BULBS AND LANDSCAPING



West Side Recommendations

1. Reconfigure the bus stop design to provide a widened curb bulb waiting area, expanded glass canopy area and bench and leaning rails.
2. Install glass canopies, landscaping, benches sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Discourage use of metal security fences.
4. Add pedestrian light fixtures.

DRAFT

BLANCHARD-LENORA: WEST



ADD CURB BULB AND LANDSCAPING

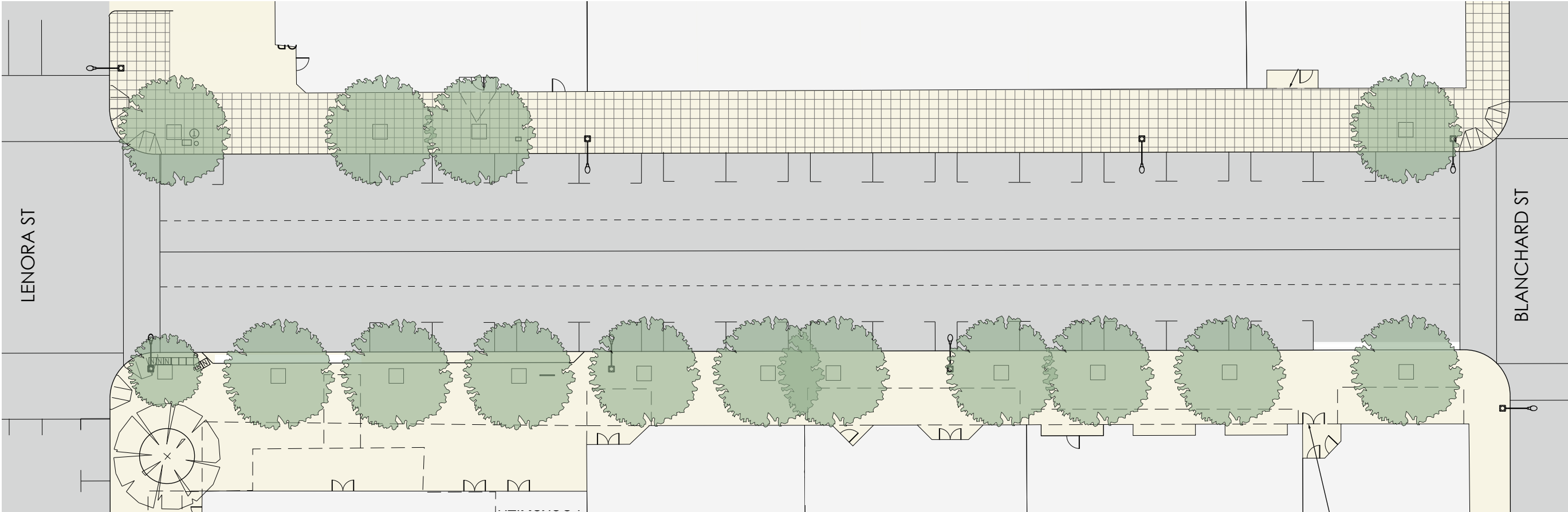
ADD OUTDOOR CAFE/ RESTAURANT SPACE AT GARAGE (RETAIN BARBER SHOP)

CONFIRM TREE REPLACEMENT AT NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH HONEY LOCUST

ADD PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING AT ALL STREET LIGHT POLES

CONFIRM GLASS CANOPY AT NEW DEVELOPMENT

AD GLASS CANOPY



Analysis

The last block in the study area is in a Downtown Mixed Residential zone with heights up to 125' allowed. The east side is marked by the 27 story Royal Crest Apartment building at the corner of Lenora, a five story office condo building and three two story brick buildings of average quality. Redevelopment of the north corner is likely. The west side of the street is marked by a new large Plymouth Housing development in the center of the block flanked by the Brasa building on the south and a one story brick bldg on the north. The Brasa building was recently nominated to as a historic landmark.

East Side Recommendations

1. Preserve the Honey Locust street trees.
2. Install landscaping, benches, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Add curb bulbs with landscaping at both intersections.
4. Provide bench at base of evergreen tree
5. extend storefronts to back edge of sidewalk
6. Add pedestrian light fixtures.

BLANCHARD-LENORA: EAST



ADD CURB BULB
AND SIDEWALK

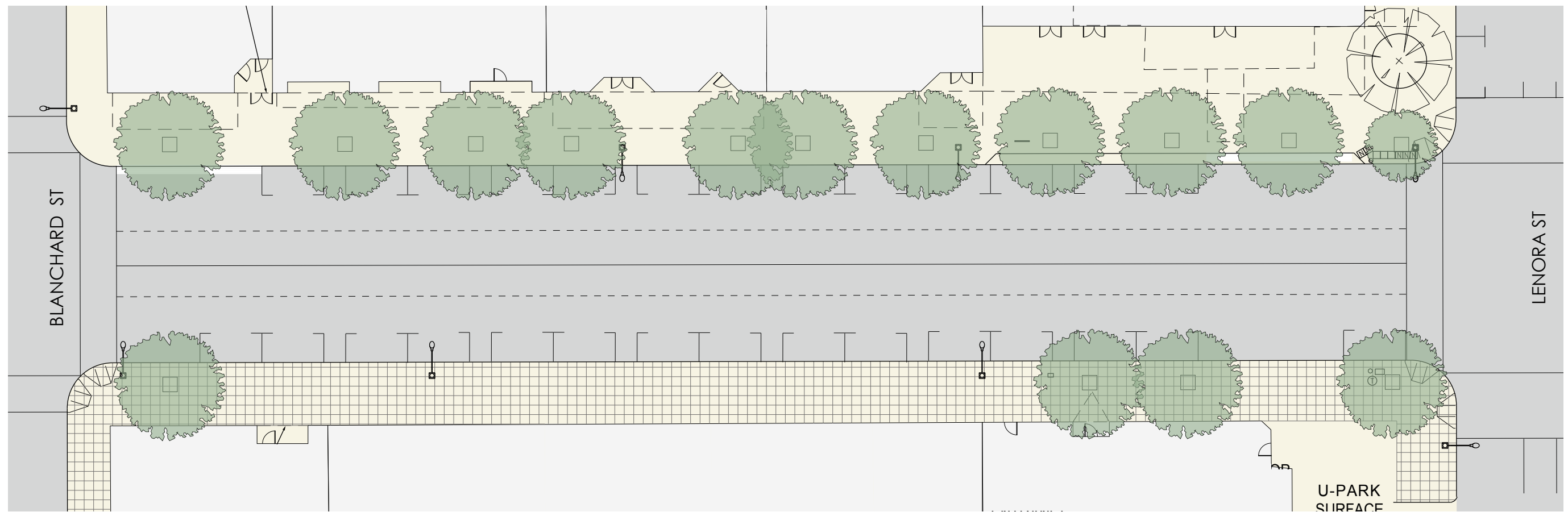
EXTEND STOREFRONTS
TO BACK EDGE OF
SIDEWALK

ADD PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING
TO ALL STREET LIGHTS

EXTEND STOREFRONTS TO
BACK EDGE OF SIDEWALK

PROVIDE BENCH AT BASE
OF EVERGREEN TREE

ADD CURB
BULBS AND
LANDSCAPING



West Side Recommendations

1. Confirm that Honey Locust street trees will be located in front of new development.
2. Install landscaping, benches, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and public art projects as per the general recommendations.
3. Add curb bulbs with landscaping at both intersections.
4. Add pedestrian light fixtures.
5. Encourage an outdoor dining area/café at the garage space (potentially an expansion of Brasa restaurant). Retain the barber shop.

PROCESS, RESEARCH AND CONTACT HISTORY

- 5/4 – Met with John Taylor at DSA and Lyle Bicknell (DPD) and toured the project area
- 5/14 – Met with Doug Chantry at Macy's on site to discuss issues with loading gates and waiting area.
- 5/15 – Presented project scope and preliminary observations to the Third avenue task force.
- 5/17 – Met with Third/Pine developers (Paul Breneki, Tom Bartholomew, Charles Wallace (Sienna), Jack McCollough at DPD to discuss opportunities to coordinate design improvements.
- 6/8 – Met with Kate Joncas and John Taylor at DSA
- 6/13 – Met with several SDOT staff members to review progress
- 6/15 – Toured the study area with Tad Savinar, made presentation to tech review group and led a design discussion.
- 6/20 – spoke with Art Wahl owner of Ross Bldg corner about development plans
- 6/21 – Spoke with HC Roche about US Post Office plans for redevelopment
- 6/21 – Met with Metro Staff.
- 6/25 – Met with John Resha
- 7/25 – presented draft analysis to SDOT
- 7/31 – presented draft analysis to technical advisory group (DPD, SDOT, Metro, DSA, UMG)
- 8/17 – presented draft report to Policy Advisory Group.

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

MOU (draft)

Vehicular signage memo

Meetings and interview notes

Miscellaneous newspaper articles

Contact and research notes (Macys, Art Wahl, Hines Bldg)

Policy Advisory Team

Diane Sugimura (DPD)
Grace Crunican (SDOT)
Kevin Desmond (Metro)
Kate Joncas (DSA)

Technical Review Team

Lyle Bicknell, DPD: SDOT: Ann Sutphin, Mark Keller, Eric Widstrand, Casey Hildreth, Dawn Schellenberg, Christine Alar, Mike Estey, Wayne Wentz; Metro: Sharon Slebodnick, Owen Keho, Jay Vavra, Kathy Cross; Urban Mobility Group: John Resha; Belltown Housing and Land Use Subcommittee: Ron Turner.

Report Team

Lyle Bicknell, Seattle DPD,
Mahlon Clements, ZGF
Don Miles, ZGF
Erin Swain, ZGF
Tad Savinar, Urban Design and Public Art
Michael Reed, Mayer Reed Environmental Graphics.

Design of Bus stops. The current configuration with the ubiquitous Metro shelter creates a 'hut' on the street that is no longer appropriate or supportive of a healthy mix of street activity. The new proposed configuration has recently been implemented at 3rd & Madison and to a certain degree, Benaroya Hall. Ideally, a more generous landscaping can be provided than at Third and Madison. It is essential that the protective canopy is glass and in all cases must be very carefully lit with appropriate quantities and qualities of lighting for the long dark commuting periods Seattle experiences. This design removes the clutter on the sidewalk and opens up views and access that is extremely important to the safety and security. With the removal of the iconic shelter, an extremely clear and thoughtful bus information signage system becomes critical. It is also extremely important that the new configuration integrate and support smaller scale retail uses where they occur. Lastly, since the recently expanded transit operator booth in front of the Post Office is inconsistent with this new model the functions and need for this facility should be carefully scrutinized and, if essential, provided in a less obtrusive location and design.

Bus Rapid Transit and Streetcar. The designation of Third Avenue as the location for the new RapidRide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service raises questions that need to be better evaluated before it is implemented. Although it may be the best ultimate location, the decision is extremely important and should be clearly made in the broadest context of urban design as well as bus operations. The BRT service appears to be somewhat inconsistent with the paradigm of service to close in neighborhoods on Third Avenue with more regional routes on Second and Fourth Avenues. The presumed larger and more physically extensive stops and longer dwell times may also conflict with recommendations of this study intended to improve the street character and experiences. Planning for a streetcar through the city should consider Third Avenue as a potential route.

Adjacent Storefront Improvements. Detailed analysis and design recommendations for adjacent storefronts is annotated in the following 'block by block' section of the report. Since, funding for these improvements will be largely the responsibility of the adjacent property owner and/or business tenants a specific process to expedite, streamline and generally assist with the effort required to develop more detailed design documents and fund the actual construction

improvement will be needed. Three conspicuous locations are noted where improvements to improve adjacent edges could be initiated and help demonstrate the combined public/private commitment to improve the street.

- **Ross** - The Ross Building Storefront suffers from severely neglected storefront. The tenant, Ross Inc is a Fortune 500 company with 2006 revenues of over 5.6 billion dollars. No apparent reason exists for allowing this condition to negatively impact the overall quality and success of neighboring owners and businesses. New modern and interesting storefront displays with generous lighting need to be provided. A glass canopy is also strongly recommended. It is recommended that either the City or a representative DSA contact the store manager to request these improvements are made. If action is not taken corporate management should be contacted.
- **Macy's** - The gate for Macy's loading dock is distressed and needs to be replaced. Macy's has initiated the idea of improving the design quality of the gate and should be supported by the city through cooperation, assistance with historic issues and permitting. Several ideas include using a more artful use of ornamental metal that would complement the historic structure. Lighting should be used in the solution as extensively as possible. Although the design for this should anticipate the recommended expansion of sidewalk width in this area, it could proceed independent and immediately of that work.
- **US Post Office/Transit Tunnel Entrance** - University Street marks the South East corner of the downtown retail core and gateway to the Seattle waterfront and harbor steps. Although Benaroya Hall contributes an appropriate civic quality and character to the west side of the Avenue, the sidewalk on the east side has many negative conditions that can and should be fixed as soon as possible. A specific design for the sidewalk and coordinated improvements to the transit tunnel station, parking garage and US Post Office should be developed.
- **Metro Supervisor Booth** - The size, design and location of the supervisor both in front of the post office exacerbates the functional and image problems suffered by Third Avenue. In over 30 observations over the past three months, at different times of the morning, day and evening, the booth has never been occupied. It does not appear to have been used since its recent expansion. If the uses it is intended to serve are indeed critical to Metro service (recording, monitoring, emergency equipment were mentioned in meeting with metro) agreements should be pursued to accommodate these functions in adjacent structures. If this is not feasible and the structure must remain in the sidewalk, the size of the structure should be minimized and design quality significantly improved.